

Appendix 2-Part B

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- The FBI is aware of contact between the hijackers and a close friend of Bassnan's, Khaled al-Kayed, a commercial airline pilot and certified flight instructor living in San Diego. Al-Kayed admitted to the FBI that in May 2000, al-Mihdhar and al-Hazini contacted him about learning to fly Boeing jet aircraft.

FBI documents speculate that Osama Bassnan [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The FBI's November 18, 2002 response contends that this was an early investigative theory based on asset reporting which the FBI has not been able to corroborate. However, there is also additional information possibly tying Bassnan to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In 1992, while he was living in Washington, DC, Bassnan listed his employment as the Saudi Arabian Education Mission. FBI documents state that [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Bassnan also has other ties to the Saudi Government. Bassnan's wife received a monthly stipend from Princess Haifa. In a recent search of Bassnan's residence, the FBI located copies of 31 cashiers checks totaling \$74,000, during the period February 22, 1999 to May 30, 2002. These checks were payable to Bassnan's wife and were drawn on the Riggs Bank account of Prince Bandar's wife. The FBI has determined that there has been a standing order on Princess Haifa's account since January 1999 to send \$2000 a month to Bassnan's wife. Bassnan's wife was allegedly receiving the funding for "nursing services," but, according to the [REDACTED] document, there is no evidence that Bassnan's wife provided nursing services. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

On at least one occasion, Bassnan received a check directly from Prince Bandar's account. According to the FBI, on May 14, 1998, Bassnan cashed a check from Bandar in the amount of \$15,000. Bassnan's wife also received at least one check directly from Bandar. She also received one additional check from Bandar's wife, which she cashed on January 8, 1998, for \$10,000.

[REDACTED]

In the October 9, 2002 hearing FBI Executive Assistant Director D'Amuro commented on this funding:

I believe that we do have money going from Bandar's wife, \$2,000 a month up to about \$64,000. What the money was for is what we don't know."

[REDACTED] testified:

[REDACTED]. She gives money to a lot of different groups and people from around the world. We've been able to uncover a number of these...but maybe if we can discover that she gives to 20 different radical groups, well, gee, maybe there's a pattern here.

The FBI has also developed additional information clearly indicating that Bassnan is an extremist and supporter of Usama Bin Laden. In 1993, the FBI became aware that Bassnan had hosted a party for the Blind Shaykh at his house in Washington, DC in October 1992. Bassnan has made many laudatory remarks to FBI assets about Bin Laden, referring to Bin Laden as the official Khalifate and the ruler of the Islamic world. According to an FBI asset, Bassnan spoke of Bin Laden "as if he were a god." Bassnan also stated to an FBI asset that he heard that the U.S. Government had stopped approving visas for foreign students. He considered such measures to be insufficient as there are already enough Muslims in the United States to destroy the United States and make it an Islamic state within ten to fifteen years. According to FBI documents, Bassnan also knew Bin Laden's family in Saudi Arabia and speaks on his mobile telephone with members of the family who are living in the United States.

Phone Numbers Linking Abu Zubaida to a Company in the United States and a Saudi Diplomat in Washington

On March 28, 2002 U.S. and coalition forces retrieved the telephone book of Abu Zubaida, whom the U.S. Government has identified as a senior al-Qa'ida operational coordinator. According to an FBI document, "a review of toll records has linked several of the numbers found in Zubaida's phonebook with U.S. phone numbers." One of the numbers is unlisted and subscribed to by the ASPCO Corporation in Aspen, Colorado. On July 15, 2002,

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FBI Headquarters sent a lead to the Denver Field Office requesting that it investigate this connection. On September 19, 2002 agents of the Denver Field Office responded, stating that they had completed their initial investigation.

According to the FBI's Denver Office, ASPCOL is the umbrella corporation that manages the affairs of the Colorado residence of Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to the United States. The facility is protected by Scimitar Security. Agents of the Denver Field Office noted that neither ASPCOL nor Scimitar Security is listed in the phone book or is easily locatable. In addition, the Colorado Secretary of State's office has no record of ASPCOL. The Denver office did not attempt to make any local inquiries about ASPCOL, as they believed that any inquiries regarding ASPCOL would be quickly known by Prince Bandar's employees. Due to the sensitivity of this matter, they decided to hold their investigation of ASPCOL in abeyance until they received additional guidance from FBI Headquarters.

According to the FBI, the phone number of an individual named [REDACTED] of McLean, Virginia was found within the effects of Abu Zubaida. [REDACTED] is reportedly a bodyguard at the Saudi Embassy in Washington, DC. The FBI now suspects that he may be a [REDACTED]. In a September 17, 2002 document, the FBI notes that the Bureau is opening an investigation on [REDACTED] due to the size and value of his residence and his suspicious activity in approaching U.S. Intelligence Community personnel. It also appears that [REDACTED] has been in contact with [REDACTED], which is located at [REDACTED], in McLean, Virginia. The FBI has identified this address as the address of Prince Bandar. According to the FBI, [REDACTED] is officially a driver for the Saudi Embassy. [REDACTED] number was also linked to ASPCOL, Prince Bandar's umbrella company located in Colorado.

It should be noted that the FBI's November 18, 2002 response states that "CIA traces have revealed no direct (emphasis added) links between numbers found in Zubaida's phone book and numbers in the United States."

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The U.S. Government also located another Virginia number at an Usama Bin Laden safehouse in Pakistan. The number is subscribed to by an individual named [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was interviewed by the FBI in June 2002. He could not explain why his number ended up at a safehouse in Pakistan, but stated that he regularly provides services to a couple who are personal assistants to Prince Bandar. This couple's driver is an individual named [REDACTED], who is assigned to the Saudi Embassy in Washington, DC. According to [REDACTED] regularly called [REDACTED] business and frequently travels back and forth to Pakistan.

Other Saudi Government Officials in the United States Who May Have Been in Contact with the September 11 Hijackers

Among the individuals who may have been associates of the al-Hazmi and al-Mihdhar was Shaykh al-Thumairy. According to the [REDACTED] memorandum reviewed by the Joint Inquiry Staff, "initial indications are that al-Thumairy may have had a physical or financial connection to al-Hazmi and al-Mihdhar, but we are still looking at this possibility." Al-Thumairy is an accredited diplomat at the Saudi Consulate in Los Angeles and is also considered one of the "imams" at the King Fahad Mosque in Culver City, California. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

According to FBI documents, the King Fahad mosque was built in 1998 from funding from the Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Abdulaziz. The mosque is attended by members of the Saudi Consulate in Los Angeles and is widely known for its anti-Western views. FBI documents indicate that Mohdhar Abdullah drove al-Hazmi and al-Mihdhar to the King Fahad Mosque, before al-Mihdhar returned to Saudi Arabia.

Several individuals on the East Coast whom the hijackers may have met may also had connections to the Saudi Government. After the terrorist attacks, the FBI discovered that, during September 2001, an individual named Saleh al-Hussayen stayed at the same hotel in Herndon, Virginia where al-Hazmi was staying at the time. According to FBI documents al-Hussayen is apparently a "Saudi Interior Ministry employee/official." He claimed not to know the hijackers.

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but agents in the FBI's Washington Field Office believed he was being deceptive. The interview was terminated when al-Hussayen either passed out or feigned a seizure requiring medical treatment. He was released from the hospital several days later and managed to depart the United States despite law enforcement efforts to locate and re-interview him.

Saleh al-Hussayen is the uncle of Sami Omar al-Hussayen. Sami al-Hussayen is connected to the Islamic Assembly of North America (IANA) and is the subject of an FBI counterterrorism investigation. The FBI has also discovered that Saleh al-Hussayen is a major contributor to the IANA, a non-profit organization based in Michigan that is dedicated to the spread of Islam worldwide. According to the FBI, the IANA's mission is actually to spread Islamic fundamentalism and Salafist doctrine throughout the United States and the world at large. The IANA solicits funds from wealthy Saudi benefactors, extremist Islamic Shaykhs, and suspect non-governmental organizations. According to FBI documents, IANA has solicited money from Prince Bandar, but the documents are unclear as to whether Bandar actually contributed money to this organization.

FBI documents also indicate that several Saudi Naval officers were in contact with the September 11 hijackers. FBI documents state that the San Diego Field Office opened a counterterrorism investigation on an individual named Osama Nooh, a Saudi Naval officer, due to his association with Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar. In addition, Laffi al-Harbi, another Saudi Naval officer, was in telephonic contact with flight 77 hijackers Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi on nine occasions from March 11, 2000 to March 27, 2000.

The Jacksonville FBI Field Office is conducting an investigation to determine whether Saleh Ahmed Bedaiwi, a Saudi Naval officer within its territory was in contact with any of the hijackers. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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The FBI has also discovered some more tenuous connections between Saudi Government personnel and the hijackers during the course of the PENTTBOM investigation. For example, according to the FBI, an individual named Fahad Abdullah Saleh Bakala was close friends with September 11 hijackers Ahmed al-Ghamdi and Hamza al-Ghamdi. Bakala previously "worked as a pilot for the Saudi Royal family, flying Usama Bin Ladin between Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia during UBL's exile." In addition, an FBI source stated after September 11 that he/she was 50% sure that al-Mihdhar was a visitor at an apartment in McLean, Virginia that was occupied in July and August 2001 by Hamad Alotaibi of the Saudi Embassy Military Division. FBI documents also note that September 11 hijacker Saeed Alghamdi may have also visited the address.

Connections Between Saudi Government Officials in the United States and Other Possible Terrorist Operatives

The Joint Inquiry also reviewed information in FBI files, suggesting other possible connections between Saudi Government officials and terrorist operatives.

For example, according to FBI documents, there is evidence that hijackers Marwan al-Shehhi and Mohamed Atta were in contact with Mohammed Rafique Quadir Harununi, the subject of an FBI counterterrorism investigation since 1999 and a close associate of Abdullah Bin Ladin, who is referred to in FBI documents as Usama Bin Ladin's half brother. Abdullah Bin Ladin, who is the subject of several FBI investigations, is currently in the United States [redacted]

[redacted] He claims to work for the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Washington, DC as an administrative officer. Abdullah Bin Ladin has financed Quadir's company and is listed by Quadir as the emergency contact for Quadir's children. They are in frequent email and phone contact as well.

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According to the FBI, Abdullah Bin Ladin has a number of connections to terrorist organizations. He is the President and Director of the World Arab Muslim Youth Association (WAMY) and the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Sciences in America. Both organizations are local branches of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

According to the FBI, there is reason to believe that WAMY is "closely associated with the funding and financing of international terrorist activities and in the past has provided logistical support to individuals wishing to fight in the Afghan War." In 1998, the CIA published a paper characterizing WAMY as a NGO that provides funding, logistical support and training with possible connections to the Arab Afghans network, Hamas, Algerian extremists, and Philippine militants.²

Also of potential interest, at least in retrospect, is the 1999 incident involving Mohammed al-Qudhaeem and Hamdan al-Shalawi. Al-Qudhaeem and al-Shalawi were flying from Phoenix to Washington, DC to attend a party at the Saudi Embassy. After they boarded the plane in Phoenix, they began asking the flight attendants technical questions about the flight that the flight attendants found suspicious. When the plane was in flight, al-Qudhaeem asked where the bathroom was; one of the flight attendants pointed him to the back of the plane. Nevertheless, al-Qudhaeem went to the front of the plane and attempted on two occasions to enter the cockpit. The plane made an emergency landing and the FBI investigated the incident, but decided not to pursue a prosecution. At the time, al-Qudhaeem and al-Shalawi claimed that the Saudi Embassy paid for their airplane tickets.

After the FBI discovered that an individual in Phoenix who was the subject of a counterterrorism investigation was driving al-Shalawi's car, the Bureau opened a counterterrorism investigation on al-Shalawi. In November 2000, the FBI received reporting from [REDACTED] that al-Shalawi had trained at the terrorist camps in Afghanistan and had received explosives training to perform "Khebar Towers"-type attacks. After the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Phoenix Field Office attached even potentially greater significance to that 1999 incident. A Phoenix FBI communication explained the theory behind this: "Phoenix FBI now

² According to the FBI's November 18, 2002 response, although several officials in WAMY support al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, the intelligence is insufficient to show whether the organization as a whole and its senior leadership support terrorism.

[REDACTED]

believes both men were specifically attempting to test the security procedures of America West Airlines in preparation for and in furtherance of UBL/Al Qaeda operations."

In testimony before the Joint Inquiry, the agent who drafted the "Phoenix EC" stated:

In a post 9/11 world, I went back and looked at that as possibly being some sort of dry run. It is currently under investigation.

After September 11, 2001, al-Qudhaeain [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In interviews, a Phoenix FBI agent stated that Phoenix [REDACTED] believed that al-Qudhaeain might be [REDACTED]. His profile is similar to that of al-Bayouni and Bassnan. He is in the United States as a student and does not have a visible means of income. He is in frequent contact with Saudi Government establishments in the United States and appears to be very involved in the affairs of the local Saudi community. He runs a "Saudi Club" in Phoenix, and assists Saudi students in the area. The FBI has also developed information that al-Qudhaeain was receiving money from the Saudi Government but, as of August 2002, had not obtained the relevant bank records for review. The FBI's Phoenix Field Office has speculated that al-Qudhaeain and others may be [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

There are other indications in FBI files that elements of the Saudi Government may have provided support to terrorist networks. For example, the FBI had identified the Ibn Tamiyah Mosque in Culver City as a site of extremist-related activity both before and after September 11. Several subjects of San Diego investigation prior to September 11 had close connections to the mosque. Based on interviews and review of FBI files, San Diego FBI agents believed at the time that these subjects were laundering money through this mosque first to Somali non-profit organizations and then to other entities affiliated with Usama Bin Laden.

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In approximately 1998, the FBI became aware of millions of dollars in wire transfers from the Somali community in San Diego to Al Barakaat Trading Company and other businesses affiliated with Usama Bin Ladin. At the time, the funding appeared to be originating from the local Somali community in the form of donations to various Somali non-profits. However, the FBI now believes that some of the funding actually originated from Saudi Arabia and that both the Ibn Tamiyah Mosque in Los Angeles and the Islamic Center of San Diego were involved in laundering the money.

According to the former FBI agent in San Diego who was involved in this investigation, this scheme may allow the Saudi Government to provide al-Qa'ida with funding through covert or indirect means. In his October 9, 2002 testimony the former agent commented on the possible money laundering:

My guess Saudi-it's connected somehow with the Saudis. And knowing that probably 70-80 percent of the population of Saudi Arabia support Usama Bin Ladin, it might be an indication.

There are also indications of Saudi governmental support for terrorist activity through charitable organizations. The Saudi-based Umm al-Qura Islamic Charitable Foundation (UQ) is an Islamic non-governmental organization linked to terrorist support activities. According to a May 2002 Defense Intelligence Terrorism Summary, the UQ's activities in support of terrorism include: suspicious money transfers, document forgery, providing jobs to wanted terrorist suspects, and financing travel for youths to attend jihad training. The Defense communication notes that since September 2001, UQ couriers have transported over \$330,000 in cash, most of which they received from Saudi Embassies in the Far East. In January 2002, UQ administrator Yassir El-Sayid Mohammed traveled to Thailand to pick up approximately \$200,000 from the Saudi Embassy in Bangkok. In early November 2001, the personal assistant to the UQ administrator traveled to Kuala Lumpur for a meeting at the Saudi Arabian Embassy. He returned with tens of thousands of dollars, according to the Department of Defense.

CIA, Treasury, and FBI officials have all expressed their concern about the al-Haramain Foundation's ties to both the Saudi Government and terrorist activity. According to the FBI's

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November 18, 2002 response, the al-Harainain Islamic Foundation (HIF) has clear ties to the Saudi Government, and intelligence reporting suggests it is providing financial and logistical support to al-Qa'ida. In 1993, HIF established its U.S.-based office in Ashland, Oregon, and that office has since received approximately \$700,000 from the parent offices in Saudi Arabia. The FBI has a pending investigation of HIF and the activities of the Portland HIF Office. As discussed above, the FBI has located correspondence between al-Bayoumi and the HIF. From the documents, it is clear that HIF was interested in appointing the imam of the mosque in Cajon, California, that al-Bayoumi managed.

The Treasury General Counsel testified about his agency's concern about the foundation:

MR. AUFHAUSER: Second, and this is important point, it also rises out of Rick's testimony, on al-Haramain, the two branch offices that we took a public and joint action against, al-Haramain really does represent a significant issue for the PCC and for terrorist financing and for the United States policy. It is, of course, the largest, I think the largest Islamic charity in the world. Its name is synonymous with charity in the Islamic world. Its direct overseers are members of the Royal Family; significant contributors are members of the Royal Family. We don't have a great deal of intelligence on the headquarters, about whether they are knowingly assisting people in al-Qa'ida and others; but in significant branch offices yet to be designated and under current investigation, we have ample evidence that large cash amounts are being couriered to those branch offices, that large wire transfers of money are being sent to those offices, that a great deal of the money is being dissipated through misspending, unaccounted for, and finally, that those offices have significant contacts with extremists, Islamic extremists.

CIA officials recently testified that they are making progress on their investigations of al-Haramain:

A year ago we had a lot of reporting suggesting branch offices were tied to al-Qa'ida... Over the last year we developed a lot of intelligence and law enforcement information and we prepared a paper about a month, six weeks ago which assembled all of that... That paper gave us the first clear indication that the head of the central office is complicit in supporting terrorism, and it also raised questions about Prince Nayef.

Finally, [REDACTED], the subject of Phoenix and Portland FBI counterterrorism investigations, also has close ties to a member of the Saudi royal family. [REDACTED] no longer resides in the United States, but is still the subject of an FBI investigation. The FBI opened an

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investigation of [REDACTED] an employee of Saudi Arabian Airlines, in 1999 after receiving information [REDACTED] that Bin Laden lieutenant Abu Zubaida had been in contact with a telephone number associated with [REDACTED] in Portland. In May 2001, two individuals were arrested in Bahrain and later admitted they were on their way to blow up U.S. facilities in Saudi Arabia. One of them had a passport that had been issued to one of [REDACTED]. The FBI's Phoenix Field Office also received source reporting in 1999 that [REDACTED] was checking security at the Southwest border and discussing the possibility of infiltrating individuals into the United States.

The FBI has developed information that [REDACTED] has close ties with one of the Saudi princes and accompanies him on many trips, including travel to the United States. According to the FBI, [REDACTED] was recently interrogated at the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay. He informed the FBI that [REDACTED] got the job at Saudi Arabian Airlines through his contacts. He said that [REDACTED] did not earn much money in this job, but that he "had another source of income through a Saudi prince" named Khalid al-Bandar. According to [REDACTED], [REDACTED] performed miscellaneous tasks for the Prince, such as handling real estate matters and assisting the Prince's grandmother. [REDACTED] traveled many places with the Prince, including Europe, and often to the United Arab Emirates. [REDACTED] made the cryptic comment that nobody "knew everything about [REDACTED]." Although his name was on the State Department's watchlist, [REDACTED] was apparently able to circumvent the Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service because he was traveling with the Saudi prince. The FBI only learned of the trip after the fact. Agents in the FBI's Portland Field Office expressed their concern that [REDACTED] and others were using their status as Saudi Arabian Airlines employees as a cover to enable them to transport weapons in and out of the United States.

Lack of Saudi Cooperation in Counterterrorism Investigations

In testimony and interviews, a number of FBI agents and CIA officers complained to the Joint Inquiry about a lack of Saudi cooperation in terrorism investigations both before and after the September 11 attacks. For example, a veteran New York FBI agent stated that, from his

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[REDACTED]

point of view, the Saudis have been useless and obstructionist for years. In this agent's opinion, the Saudis will only act when it is in their self-interest.

When a high-level [REDACTED] officer was asked how the September 11 attacks might have been prevented, he cited greater Saudi cooperation, pointing to an example from the summer of 2001, when the U.S. Government requested Saudi assistance, with no success. In May 2001, the U.S. Government became aware that an individual in Saudi Arabia was in contact with Abu Zubaida and was most likely aware of an upcoming al-Qa'ida operation. The U.S. Government pressured the Saudi Government to locate him. The Saudis informed the U.S. Government that they required additional information to do so. The U.S. Government agency that had originally learned of this individual's knowledge refused to provide the Saudis with additional information because it would reveal sources and methods. The National Security Council also tried to pressure the Saudis, but the Saudis would not cooperate without the additional information.

According to some FBI personnel, this type of response is typical from the Saudis. For example, one FBI agent described one investigation after September 11 in which he provided the Saudi Government with copies of the subjects' Saudi passports. The Saudi Government maintained that they had no record of the subjects.

According to the former Chief of Alec Station, the unit in the DCI's Counterterrorist Center established in 1996 to focus specifically on Usama Bin Laden, it was clear from about 1996 that the Saudi Government would not cooperate with the United States on matters relating to Usama Bin Laden. There is a May 1996 memo from the DCI's Counterterrorist Center [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stating that the Saudis had stopped providing background information or other assistance on Bin Laden because Bin Laden had "too much information about official Saudi dealings with Islamic extremists in the 1980s for Riyadh to deliver him into U.S. hands." In a June 1997 memo to the DCI, Alec Station reemphasized the lack of Saudi cooperation and stated that there was little prospect of future cooperation regarding Bin Laden. The former Chief of Alec Station thought that the U.S. Government's hope of eventually obtaining Saudi cooperation was unrealistic because Saudi assistance to the U.S. Government on this matter was contrary to Saudi national interests.

[REDACTED] testified on this issue on October 9, 2002:

On the issue of al-Qa'ida and Saudi intelligence, that goes back to our efforts to interact with the Saudis to get them to help us on investigating al-Qa'ida...for the most part it was a very troubled relationship where the Saudis were not providing us quickly or very vigorously with response to it. Sometimes they did, many times they didn't. It was just very slow in coming.

Both FBI and CIA personnel cited an individual named Madani al-Tayyib as a specific case in which the Saudis were uncooperative. The CIA and the FBI had been pressuring the Saudis for years for permission to talk to al-Tayyib. According to the former head of ALEC Station, al-Tayyib managed all of Bin Laden's finances when Bin Laden was in Sudan, and any expense over \$1,000 had to be approved by al-Tayyib. Al-Tayyib moved to London in 1996 to work with Khalid al-Fawwaz, another important al-Qa'ida figure who has since been arrested. In the summer of 1996, al-Tayyib returned to Saudi Arabia. The Saudis continuously refused the FBI's and the CIA's requests to talk to al-Tayyib, stating, in the words of an FBI agent, that al-Tayyib was "just a poor man who lost his leg. He doesn't know anything."

The former chief of Alec Station also cited the example of Mohammed Janal Khalifa. Khalifa is Bin Laden's brother-in-law and an important figure in al-Qa'ida. The U.S. Government arrested Khalifa in the United States in 1994. Khalifa had been sentenced to death *in absentia* by the Jordanian Government for his role in a bombing in Jordan. As a result, the U.S. agreed to extradite him to Jordan. The Jordanians then returned him to Saudi Arabia. In the opinion of the CIA officer, the Saudis "bought off" the Jordanians for the return of Khalifa. According to the CIA officer, when Khalifa subsequently arrived in Saudi Arabia, he was met by at least one important government official. Khalifa now works for a Riyadh-based NGO and travels and operates freely.

The General Counsel of the U.S. Treasury Department testified at the July 23, 2002 hearing about the lack of Saudi cooperation with the U.S.:

There is an almost intuitive sense, however, that things are not being volunteered. So I want to fully inform you about it, that we have to ask and we have to seek and we have to strive. I will give you one-and-a-half examples. The first is, after some period, the Saudis have agreed to the designation of a man named Sulaydin, who is notoriously involved in all of this; and his designation will be public within the next 10 days. They came forward to us 2 weeks ago and said, okay, we think we should go forward with the designation and a freeze order against Mr. Julaydin. We asked, what do you have on him? Because they certainly know what we have on him, because we shared it as we tried to convince them that they ought to join us. The answer back was, nothing new.

MR. BEREUTER: Do you believe that?

MR. AUFLAUSER: No. I think that taxes credulity, or there is another motive we are not being told.

Status of the U.S. Intelligence Community's Investigations into Connections Between Terrorism and Saudi Government Officials

Both the FBI and the CIA have informed the Committees that they are treating the Saudi issue seriously. According to the November 18, 2002 FBI response, the FBI and CIA have established a working group to look into the Saudi issue. The FBI formed a squad at the Washington Field Office [REDACTED] to investigate this issue and [REDACTED]

The image consists of seven horizontal bars of varying lengths and positions. The first four bars are positioned at the top, with the second being the longest. The fifth bar is located in the middle-left area. The sixth bar is positioned below the fifth and to its right. The seventh bar is the longest and is located at the bottom of the frame. All bars are dark grey and have a slightly irregular, organic shape.

[REDACTED]

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However, both the FBI and the CIA still have only a limited understanding of the Saudi Government's ties to terrorist elements. In the October 9, 2002 closed hearing, Director Mueller stated:

If I have one preliminary note of caution, it is that at this point there are more questions than answers, and I would caution against jumping to conclusions before we know a lot more.

A document located by the Joint Inquiry Staff confirms that the FBI's Washington Field Office is still in the early stages of focusing on these investigations. In an August 15, 2002, communication, a field office agent stated that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In that same document, the Washington Field Office asked [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] acknowledged in his testimony that the [REDACTED] understanding of this issue is limited as well.

With regard to the specific question of have we seen the Saudi intelligence services supporting terror groups, I think the record is not clear at all on that.

Both the FBI and CIA recognized the possibility that individuals connected to the Saudi Government may be providing support to terrorists.

[REDACTED] testified:

So there is certainly a good, good chance that there are sympathizers or extremists, sympathizers possibly for al-Qa'ida within the security services.

[REDACTED] also noted that:

Abu Zubaydah said he's confident that al-Qa'ida must have contact certainly with Saudis in the United States and that al-Qa'ida and Usama Bin Ladin are particularly— they

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invest significant energy in cultivating what Abu Zubaydah called good relationships with Saudis of all standing...He said bin Ladin is very pleased when Saudis in the military, those successful in business and those close to the royal family to lend active support to his cause. He said bin Ladin actively seeks out such relationships.

Other CIA and FBI officials echoed these remarks in recent Congressional testimony.

[REDACTED] stated:

What we find troubling about the cases that we learned about from FBI, both the Los Angeles cases and some of the cases that the Washington Field Office has looked at, in which you're seeing Saudi money going to people, is that it's sort of a pattern that we've seen in terms of direct payments from the Saudis, the Saudi Government's longstanding support for very fundamentalist Wahabi and Salafi charities and movements around the world, which in a sense you see the money is going to fundamentalists and you would be very surprised if some of it doesn't bleed over into terrorist support...We've had a lot of suspicions before September 11 which we documented in a number of different papers, and again it's a lot of smoke and the issues that come up are who knows about the payments, on whose behalf are the payments being made, are they being made on behalf of the central government or are they being made by a local official or a person. Do the people who are making the payments know what's happening to the money? If they do know what's happening, why are they making the payments? Is it a form of blackmail? Do they recognize the terrorist support? There's the issue of are they regulating themselves as well as are they doing the due diligence that they ought to.

FBI Executive Assistant Director Pasquale D'Amato testified at that same hearing:

To date I can't sit here and tell you that those ties go back, that we can prove that the Saudi royal family is sponsoring terrorism. But there's enough smoke that we are conducting several investigations to try to determine what other information is out there.

What is clear is that the FBI did not treat the Saudis as a counterterrorism [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] threat prior to September 11, 2001.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Michael Rolince, the former head of the International Terrorism Operations Section at FBI testified:

The answer to your question is pre-9/11 there were not any significant preliminary inquiry or full investigations, with relatively few exceptions, conducted by the FBI looking at Saudi [REDACTED] or support to terrorism... I'm not going to stand here, Ms. Hill, and tell you in any way, shape or form [REDACTED]

The former Assistant Special Agent in Charge in San Diego confirmed this in his testimony:

Basically [REDACTED]. They were not a country identified by the State Department as a state sponsor of terrorism. And the theme or the common modus operandi that we saw in San Diego was that if there were [REDACTED] there, their primary objective was to monitor dissidents in the interest of protecting the royal family. So they were not viewed as an imminent threat to national security.

In the October 9, 2002 closed hearing, Director Mueller acknowledged that he became aware of some of the facts regarding the Saudi issue only as a result of the investigative work of the Joint Inquiry Staff:

I'm saying the sequence of events here, I think the staff probed and, as a result of the probing, some facts came to light here and to me, frankly, that had not come to light before, and perhaps would not have come to light had the staff not probed. That's what I'm telling you. So I'm agreeing with you that the staff probing brought out facts that may not have come to this Committee."

Senator DeWine: But what you're also saying, though, is that that probing then brought facts to your attention.

Director Mueller: Yes.